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JULY WEATHER AND CROPS

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agriculture

A radio talk by J. B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, August 3, 1932, by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations.

July weather is very important for crop growth, especially with regard to corn, spring wheat, and cotton. In our summary, one month ago, we called attention to the fact that the moisture situation at that time was rather unusual, in that nearly all sections of the country had sufficient for current crop needs. This favorable condition, however, was not generally maintained through the month of July. While the previous months had favorable rains, there was very little surplus soil moisture and, consequently, crops in July had to depend largely on the rainfall from week to week during the month. Temperatures were persistently high, with much sunshine, and this exacted a heavy toll of moisture, while, at the same time, showers during the month were of a decidedly spotted character, with most sections receiving less than the normal July water supply.

As a result of this combination of conditions, moisture in many sections of the country was insufficient for best crop growth and, in many places, more or less harmfully droughty conditions resulted. Winter wheat, of course, was very largely out of danger and, at the same time, the July weather was favorable for harvesting and threshing, except that the abnormal heat was frequently trying on men and horses. Spring wheat fared less favorably. This crop, for best filling of heads, requires plenty of moisture, while comparatively cool weather is desired to prevent too rapid, or premature ripening. Fortunately, the early-sown spring wheat was well along toward maturity before the unfavorably warm, dry weather set in, and this part of the crop was largely unaffected, but the late grain was in a sensitive stage of growth, and considerable damage resulted. The harvest of spring wheat is now well along -- practically finished in the southern half of the belt -- while threshing is progressing rapidly. Many disappointing yields are reported from some sections, because of premature ripening, while in other places the grain was cut early to avoid grasshopper damage. Ideal harvest weather has prevailed in the Pacific Northwest.

Heat and dryness have been unfavorable for ~~the~~ corn crop in general. While recent cooler weather and many local showers over considerable areas of the principal producing states have been very helpful, the warm and mostly dry conditions during the last few weeks have resulted in more or less damage in many sections of the country. Showers of the past week were of most benefit in Michigan, Indiana, parts of Illinois, southern Iowa, South Dakota, and Nebraska. The crop in the extreme western portion of the belt, especially in central and western Nebraska, the western half of Kansas, and the uplands of Oklahoma, has suffered heavily; while that on light soils in much of Missouri has been harmed considerably. In Iowa, the crop has steadily lost ground, except in the extreme southern counties, with serious and, in places, irreparable damage over many northwestern areas; tassels have been killed and silk damage or burned. In northern Illinois, dryness has been detrimental and, in the south, there has been considerable harm; in the central part of the State the crop continues mostly good to excellent. In Indiana some damage has been done, but recent showers will be very helpful, while in Ohio the crop is still mostly fair to very good, though needing rain in many

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places. In much of Kentucky corn needs moisture, as well as in most sections of the middle Atlantic area. The corn crop is well advanced; it is now silking and earing, a stage of growth, very sensitive to weather in nearly all sections of the country.

In the Cotton Belt July was mostly warm, sunny, and dry. Cotton is naturally a warm-weather, sun-loving crop, and thrives best with only a moderate amount of moisture. Consequently, July weather was rather satisfactory. In the early season of this year persistent dampness and frequent rains were decidedly favorable for boll weevil activity, but the recent dryness and warmth have held these pests in check, which has reduced the menace from this source. However, in much of the western part of the belt, especially in Texas, July rainfall was much below normal and the soil has now become unfavorably dry; it was also very scanty in the more eastern cotton districts, where there are complaints of plants shedding because of dryness. Some northeastern localities of the Cotton Belt had the warmest and driest July of record.

At the present time pastures, truck, gardens, and minor crops are needing rain in many places. The States most affected include those in the middle Atlantic area, especially Virginia, parts of which had in July only about one-fifth of normal rainfall; also Kentucky, Tennessee, parts of Louisiana, Texas, most of Oklahoma, much of Missouri, northern Iowa, and the western Plains from western Oklahoma northward. Local rains and cooler weather during the past few days have been very helpful in the Southeast and in most of the northern half of the country east of the Great Plains, while additional good showers are reported this morning from the Ohio Valley and Lake region.